

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S RECOMMENDATION

BRONX METRO NORTH STATION AREA STUDY AND RELATED ACTIONS

**C 240015 ZMX, N 240016 ZRX, C 240157 MMX, C 240158 MMX, C 240159 MMX,
C 240160 MMX, C 240163 MMX**

APPLICATION NO: C 240015 ZMX and N 240016 ZRX - Bronx Metro North Station Area Study

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by New York City Department of City Planning pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 4a & 4b.

Borough of The Bronx, Community Districts 9, 10 & 11, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated January 16, 2024, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-750.

The full proposal can be accessed on the Zoning Application Portal:

<https://zap.planning.nyc.gov/projects/2022X0431>

APPLICATION NO: C 240157 MMX – Bronx Metro North: Unionport Road Demapping

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Department of City Planning pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter and Section 5-430 et seq. of the New York City Administrative Code for an amendment to the City Map involving:

1. the elimination, discontinuance, and closing of a portion of Unionport Road between East Tremont Avenue and Guerlain Street; and
2. the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 9, Borough of The Bronx, in accordance with Map No. 13153 dated January 20, 2024 and signed by the Borough President.

The full proposal can be accessed on the Zoning Application Portal:

<https://zap.planning.nyc.gov/projects/2024X0204>

APPLICATION NO: C 240158 MMX – Bronx Metro North: Marconi Street Widening

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Department of City Planning pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the City Map involving:

1. the widening of Marconi Street north of Waters Place; and
2. the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 11, Borough of The Bronx, in accordance with Map No. 13151 dated January 20, 2024 and signed by the Borough President.

The full proposal can be accessed on the Zoning Application Portal:
<https://zap.planning.nyc.gov/projects/2024X0206>

APPLICATION NO: C 240159 MMX – Bronx Metro North: Morris Park Plaza Mapping

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Department of City Planning pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the City Map involving:

1. the establishment of Morris Park Station Plaza south of Morris Park Avenue and west of Bassett Avenue; and
2. the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 11, Borough of The Bronx, in accordance with Map No. 13152 dated January 20, 2024 and signed by the Borough President.

The full proposal can be accessed on the Zoning Application Portal:
<https://zap.planning.nyc.gov/projects/2024X0207>

APPLICATION NO: C 240160 MMX – Bronx Metro North: Marconi Street Bridge

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Department of City Planning pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the City Map involving:

1. the establishment of a street volume from the northern terminus of Marconi Street to Pelham Parkway to facilitate a future bridge connection between these two streets; and
2. the future adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 11, Borough of The Bronx in accordance with an alteration map to be prepared pursuant to the appropriate resolutions of approval.

The full proposal can be accessed on the Zoning Application Portal:
<https://zap.planning.nyc.gov/projects/2024X0208>

APPLICATION NO: C 240163 MMX – Bronx Metro North: Bronxdale Mapping

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by 1601 Bronxdale Property Owner LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the City Map involving:

1. the establishment of Pierce Avenue west of Bronxdale Avenue; and
2. the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby;

including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in Community District 11, Borough of The Bronx, in accordance with Map No. 13150 dated January 20, 2024 and signed by the Borough President.

The full proposal can be accessed on the Zoning Application Portal:
<https://zap.planning.nyc.gov/projects/2024X0205>

BACKGROUND

Introduction

It is anticipated that in 2027 Metro North Commuter Railroad’s New Haven Division will provide direct one-seat access to Pennsylvania Station, located in Manhattan. between 7th and 8th Avenues, from West 31st to West 33rd Streets. Originating in New Rochelle, New York, this new service will operate via track infrastructure constructed approximately 110 years ago. In The Bronx, 7.2 miles of linear track owned by Amtrak passes through four East Bronx communities. Each of these locations will be served by newly constructed Metro North railroad stations. Based on a one-mile radius from where each station will be built the communities to be served include:

- Co-op City: Population: 43,752 Bronx Community District 10
 - Morris Park: Population: 25,657 Bronx Community District 11
 - Parkchester-Van Nest: Population: 54,145 Bronx Community District 9
 - Hunts Point Population: 38,477 Bronx Community District 2
- Approximate Total Population: 162,031

The anticipated cost for new service and the related infrastructure improvements to be made by Metro North is approximately \$1.6 Billion. The scope of these improvements include:

- Four ADA compliant railroad stations
- 19 miles of track work
- 4 new interlockings (switches)
- 1 reconfigured interlockings
- 5 new substations providing electric services
- 2 upgraded substations
- 4 bridge rehabilitations

- New drainage infrastructure
- New Rochelle Yard expansion

According to Metro North Railroad, the travel time from the new stations to Manhattan will be reduced as follows:

- Co-op City: 75 to 35 minutes, saving 40 minutes per trip
- Morris Park: 50 to 30 minutes, saving 20 minutes per trip
- Parkchester/Van Nest: 45 to 25 minutes, saving 20 minutes per trip
- Hunts Point: 40 to 20 minutes, saving 20 minutes per trip

Trips from the new stations to New Rochelle will have the following approximate travel times:

- Hunts Point: Approximately 35 minutes
- Parkchester/Van Nest: Approximately 25 minutes
- Morris Park: Approximately 20 minutes
- Co-op City: Approximately 17 minutes

For commuters originating in Westchester County, this new service is estimated to save approximately 40 minutes of round-trip travel time per day.

At New Rochelle transfers will be provided via local service between New Rochelle, New York and Stamford, Connecticut.

The distance between each station in The Bronx is as follows:

- From the Westchester County Line to Co-op City Station: approximately 1.5 miles
- From the Co-op City Station to the Morris Park Station: approximately 1 mile
- From the Morris Park Station to the Parkchester/Van Nest Station: approximately 1.5 miles
- From the Parkchester/Van Nest Station to the Hunts Point Station: approximately 2 miles

The specific location of each station is as follows:

- Co-op City Station: 2050 Erskine Place (Block 5131, Lot 1)
- Morris Park Station: 1450 Basset Avenue (Block 4226, Lot 1)
- Parkchester/Van Nest Station: 2005 East Tremont Avenue (Block 4042, Lot 1)
- Hunts Point Station: 1161 Garrison Avenue (Block 2741, Lot 1)

The estimated total development cost of each station is as follows:

- Co-op City Station: approximately \$65 million
- Morris Park Station: approximately \$68 million
- Parkchester/Van Nest Station: approximately \$56 million
- Hunts Point Station: approximately \$67 million

The estimated total development cost of four stations is approximately \$256 Million.

Proposal

The Department of City Planning (the applicant) is proposing applications which exclusively affect the Morris Park and Parkchester/ Van Nest communities located in Bronx Community Districts 9, 10, and 11.

The overall objectives of these applications include:

- Creating new “front doors” for Bronx communities and job centers;
- Strengthening existing job centers and promoting new jobs;
- Envisioning locations in the corridor where people can meet;
- Expanding housing development, including affordable housing pursuant to the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) requirements;
- Prompting new housing development near transit;
- Increasing density on major streets, large sites, and near new transit stations;
- Allowing for retail opportunities that serve commuters;
- Allowing for growth in commercial office, medical office, healthcare, and life sciences uses near the proposed Morris Park station;
- Encouraging new mixed-use development options in areas currently zoned only for manufacturing uses;
- Establishing special zoning rules to accommodate unique development focusing on large sites; and,
- Encouraging streetscape improvements, most notably within key corridors near planned stations (East Tremont Avenue, Stillwell Avenue, White Plains Road, Bronxdale Avenue, and Eastchester Road).

The proposed new railroad service to the East Bronx and the effects of these applications is projected to:

- Facilitate approximately 7,500 units of housing, of which 1,900 units will be permanently affordable;
- Prompt the development of 1.23 million square feet of commercial uses;
- Prompt the development of 1.29 million square feet of community facility uses;
- Create approximately 10,000 jobs.

Proposed Actions:

ULURP Application No: C 240015 ZMX - Zoning Map Amendment

Affected Area: A 46-block area along main corridors including East Tremont Avenue, White Plains Road, Bronxdale Avenue, Eastchester Road, and Stillwell Avenue.

This application separates these areas:

Parkchester/Van Nest Station: A 28-block area bounded by Baker Avenue and Van Next Avenue to the north, Silver Street to the east, East Tremont Avenue to the South and St. Lawrence Avenue to the west.

Morris Park Station: An 18-block area bounded by Pelham Parkway to the north, Marconi Street to the east, Williamsbridge Road to the south and Tenbroeck Avenue to the west.

Current development includes:

- East Tremont Avenue between St. Lawrence Street and Silver Street
 - Current development is typified by industrial, automotive, and retail uses
- White Plains Road between Baker Avenue and Guerlain Street
 - Current development is typified by residential, automotive, and retail uses, as well as an existing Con Edison facility
- Bronxdale Avenue between Van Next Avenue and East Tremont Avenue
 - Current development is typified by commercial, automotive, and industrial uses and a community facility
- Eastchester Road between Pelham Parkway South and Silver Street
 - Current development is typified by healthcare campuses and commercial, automotive, and light industrial uses
- Stillwell Avenue between Eastchester Road and Pelham Parkway South
 - Current development is typified by automotive, commercial, and light industrial uses

By way of achieving the objectives the applicant has established, approval of this application will facilitate amendments to the Zoning Map including (areas defined by DCP's presentation):

Station Adjacent Areas

Current Zoning: M1-1

Proposed Zoning: C4-4 (R8)

The objectives to be realized include:

- Supporting the growth of life science, educational and health development
- Establishing residential density near the Morris Park station
- Increasing permitted commercial FAR
- Modifying the residential equivalent district to R8
- Applying contextual bulk regulations to non-residential development

Mixed-Use Transitional Areas

Current Zoning: R4, M1-1

Proposed Zoning: C4-3, C4-4

The objectives to be realized include:

- Supporting area institutions and job growth
- Providing a step-down between the station and surrounding neighborhoods
- Facilitating job growth at health care and life science institutions
- Increasing the permitted commercial FAR
- Modifying the residential equivalent to R6-1 in C4-3 districts

Neighborhood Commercial Areas

Current Zoning: R6

Proposed Zoning: R6/C2-4

The objectives to be realized include:

- Facilitating a walkable passageway to the Morris Park Station
- Encouraging retail services
- Mapping a commercial overlay to support the creation of a gateway which will provide local retail opportunities

Transitional Residential Areas

Current Zoning: R4, R6, C8-1, M1-1

Proposed Zoning: R6A, R6-1, R7-2

The objectives to be realized include:

- Responding to the context of the surround neighborhoods
- Promoting safe and active pedestrian corridors
- Prompting opportunities for new homes and retail
- Applying streetscape regulations along the corridors

High-Density Residential Areas

Current Zoning: R6, C8-1, C8-4

Proposed Zoning: R8X/C2-4

The objectives to be realized include:

- Creating a gateway to the Parkchester community
- Focusing residential densities close to the new railroad station
- Encouraging commercial uses on East Tremont Avenue
- Responding to the context of the Parkchester community
- Requiring permanently affordable housing
- Ensuring a context sensitive building envelope
- Applying streetscape rules on key corridors

Automotive/Commercial Areas

Current Zoning: C8-1, M1-1

Proposed Zoning: C8-2

The objective to be realized include:

- Creating a walkable passageway to the station
- Allowing for auto repair uses to remain
- Encouraging a transition to community serving retail development

Special Site - Bronxdale

Current Zoning: M1-1

Proposed Zoning: M1-1A/R7-3

The objectives to be realized include:

- Creating residential density close to the railroad station
- Allowing for existing industrial uses to remain
- Facilitating open space with amenities and pedestrian access to the station
- Requiring permanently affordable housing

These proposed actions are proposed to:

- Promote growth of affordable housing and retail uses near new transit;

- Modify the boundaries of the Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District along East Tremont Avenue;
- Strengthen the Morris Park jobs cluster and promote industries of the future.

Zoning Text Amendments: N 240016 ZRX

Proposed Actions:

- Establish (and map) the Special Eastchester-East Tremont Corridor District
- Establish R6-1 and M1-1A districts
- Apply Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH)
- Extend the Transit Zone
- Remove language that exclusively applies to C8-4 districts within the Special Planned Community Preservation District areas

The objectives to be realized include:

- Promoting the growth of housing and employment centers near transit
- Promoting an adequate range of services and amenities for residents, visitors, and those working within the area
- Ensuring attractive streetscape installations
- Establishing a cohesive network that would coordinate future development with the railroad stations and surrounding neighborhoods
- Incentivizing the construction of schools
- Modifying FARs and building heights in specific residential districts
- Modifying FARs in C4-3 and C4-4 districts
- Eliminating parking requirements for new housing developments
- Establishing density bonus for public realm improvements
- Authorizing bulk flexibility to accommodate bonus floor area
- Creating a transfer of floor area mechanism for the Morris Park Station Plaza
- Allowing commercial activity on 2nd floors in C2-4 Districts
- Simplifying and rationalizing bulk envelopes
- Facilitating development along the shallow lots adjacent to the railroad
- Providing for consistent parking and loading frameworks for non-residential uses

Designating Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Areas: Will require a percentage of the new housing to be permanently affordable where new housing capacity would be created, citing where limited construction of income restricted housing has taken place in the past.

ULURP Application No: C 240157 MMX - Unionport Road Demapping

The applicant is proposing to demap a portion of Unionport Road bounded by Unionport Road to the east, the lot line of Block 3952, Lot 23 to the west and Guerlain Street to the south. This area approximates 2,889 square feet. This area is currently located in an R6 zoning district. The applicant has identified this area as one of the streetscape improvements proposed as part of The

Bronx Metro North Station Study, to facilitate development of the adjacent privately owned property on Block 3952. This demapping action will also reduce redundant vehicular turning movements.

Development of the surrounding community includes residential, commercial and utility uses (Con Edison site). The Parkchester Planned Community is located to the east and south of this area. The proposed Parkchester/Van Nest Metro North Railroad station will be north of this area. Mass transportation via the Bx36 and Bx39 bus routes operate on White Plains Road. The Bx22 bus route operates on Unionport Road.

ULURP Application No: C 240158 MMX - Marconi Street Widening

The applicant is proposing to amend the City Map by mapping portions of Block 4226, Part of Lot 1, Lot 11, and part of Lot 50. Doing so will widen the western side of Marconi Street by approximately 15 feet. It will also provide for a right turn lane along the portion of the eastern side of Marconi Street. Currently the southern end of Marconi Street connects to Waters Place and its northern end terminates as a dead end. Marconi Street's distance is approximately 3,500 feet. The purpose of this proposed widening is to reduce traffic congestion and enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety.

Development in the surrounding area is typified by non-residential uses. These include the Montefiore Hutchinson medical campus, the Hutchinson Metro Center, Calvary Hospital, a hotel, retail venues, and open space used as softball fields. The Amtrak right-of-way is located approximately 500 feet west of Marconi Street. The proposed Metro North railroad station serving Morris Park will be located within this right-of-way, west of Marconi Street. Eastchester Road is located on the west side of the Amtrak line. Bus transportation is provided by the Bx21 bus line which operates on Waters Place. The Bx24 bus line does connect the Hutchinson Metro Center to Country Club Loop via Marconi Street.

ULURP Application No: C 240159 MMX - Morris Park Plaza Mapping

Approval of this application will amend the City Map to include a pedestrian plaza on two contiguous tax lots, Block 4209, Lots 10 and 70. The site is approximately 3,367 square feet. Lot 70 is a one-story building in which is located an auto repair shop. Lot 10 is used for vehicular storage. The proposed plaza site is adjacent to Metro North's proposed Morris Park station directly to the east. This site offers 121 feet of street frontage on Morris Park Avenue to the north, and 55.55 feet of street frontage on Bassett Avenue to the east. This area is currently zoned M1-1

The mapping of this new plaza represents one of the streetscape improvements being proposed by the applicant as part of its Metro North Railroad ULURP applications. The scope of this project includes the construction of an overpass from the new plaza, crossing the adjacent Bassett Avenue to the Morris Park station.

Existing developments in the surrounding community include the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Yeshiva University campuses which occupy both sides of Morris Park Avenue, terminating at Eastchester Road. Additional development includes a mix of commercial, industrial and institutional uses. Bus transportation via the Bx 21 and Bx31 bus lines operate on Eastchester Road.

ULURP Application No: C 240160 MMX - Marconi Street Bridge

The applicant is proposing to amend the City Map to include the mapping of an extension of Marconi Street from its current terminus southwest of the PSAC II facility, north to Pelham Parkway. This bridge would be located within Block 4226, and Block 4411 to the north at Pelham Parkway. As currently proposed, this extension would extend over the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad right-of-way which is used by Amtrak. The proposed bridge has not yet been designed.

The surrounding area includes M1, R6A, R5, R3-2 and R3X zones. As such, existing development varies and includes a wide range of uses. Bus transportation is provided by the Bx24 bus line. Additional service operates on Waters Place via the Bx 21 bus line.

ULURP Application No: C 240163 MMX - Bronxdale Mapping

This application is being submitted by 1601 Bronxdale Property Owner, LLC. Approval would amend the City Map to include the mapping of a new street network on portion of Block 4042, Lot 200. This new street network would improve traffic circulation to facilitate the future development of Lot 200. This project would provide direct pedestrian access between the future site of the Parkchester/Van Nest, Metro North Railroad station and Bronxdale Avenue. This mapping action would affect a total area of approximately 91,434 square feet within Block 4042, Lot 200.

This site is situated on the southeastern corner of Block 4042. It offers 225 feet of frontage on the existing New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad's right-of-way, and approximately 126 feet of frontage on Bronxdale Avenue which approximates a width of 100 feet. The total site is 91,434 square feet and is currently zoned M1-1. This location is currently occupied by a commercial use and warehouse of approximately 313,871 gross square feet. Approval of this application would also facilitate the development of Block 4042, Lots 200, 201 and 204 with mixed use residential development.

Existing development in the surrounding area is typified by automotive facilities, an elementary school, a church, and commercial and industrial uses. The Parkchester Planned Community is located on the south side of East Tremont Avenue, between Unionport Road to the west and Bronxdale Avenue to the east. Bus transportation is provided on East Tremont Avenue via the Bx40 and Bx42 bus lines.

The applicant will enter into a Mapping Agreement which provides that the City Map amendment will be filed and become effective at the time that the related zoning amendments proceeds.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

These applications have been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQ. These applications received a Positive Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified these applications as complete on January 22, 2024.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

These applications are subject to public hearings called by Bronx Community Boards 9, 10 and 11.

Bronx Community District 9:

Bronx Community Board 9 held a public hearing on these applications on March 21, 2024 and submitted a recommendation to approve these applications with conditions by a vote of 27 in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstaining.

Bronx Community District 10:

Bronx Community Board 10 held a public hearing on these applications on March 27, 2024 and submitted a recommendation in opposition to these applications by a vote of 9 in favor of approving, 14 against, and 0 abstaining.

Bronx Community District 11:

Bronx Community Board 11 held a public hearing on these applications on March 28, 2024 and submitted a recommendation to approve these applications with conditions by a vote of 25 in favor, 5 against, and 0 abstaining.

BRONX BOROUGH BOARD HEARING

The application is subject to review by The Bronx Borough Board. A hearing on these matters was held on April 29, 2024. The Bronx Borough Board held a vote on April 29, 2024 in support of the application, with a vote of 9 in favor, 1 against, and 2 abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on these applications on April 16, 2024. This hearing was conducted as a hybrid meeting both in-person at Bronx Borough Hall, Room 711 and remotely via WebEx. The applicant was present and spoke in favor of these applications. Eighteen members of the public and a representative for City Council Majority Leader Amanda Fariás testified at the hearing. Of those offering testimony, fourteen spoke in-favor and five were opposed. Upon the completion of all testimony, the public hearing was closed, though written testimony would be received until Friday, April 19, 2024. Of the written testimony received, there were thirteen in-favor and five opposed. Altogether, there were 27 statements in favor and 10 opposed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Metro-North service is expanding in The Bronx through the Penn Station Access project, which will connect four communities located at Co-op City, Hunts Point, Morris Park, and Parkchester/Van Nest to regional train service. This is an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity but now we must ensure these communities are prepared to handle the expected growth in conjunction with these new stations that will be a benefit to the existing communities that they will serve.

These new stations will be transformative for these communities by helping to alleviate the transit desert in the East Bronx. This will create better transit equity when driving into the city is becoming more expensive with the addition of congestion pricing. The new line will create economic opportunities by giving people access to new job centers while significantly reducing their commute time. These new stations will save up to 60 minutes going into Penn Station or 75 minutes if going to Connecticut, each way, resulting in commuters getting over two hours back each day that they can use to spend with their families.

The benefits of this project are not just limited to the decreased travel times to Manhattan and points north. The Department of City Planning (DCP) proposal that is before us now proposes land use changes designed to accommodate a transit-oriented development plan that will rezone the corridors around the stations to allow for new mixed-use development. This will include streetscape improvements to better connect these stations with the existing neighborhoods they surround. This project is expected to create 10,000 new jobs and nearly 7,500 new residential units with nearly 1,900 of these units being permanently affordable. This will create a range of new housing options including senior housing, veterans housing, affordable housing, and homeowner options that will have direct access to regional transit options and job centers. I always champion homeownership as a pathway to prosperity and am optimistic that this proposal will help families achieve their homeownership dreams. This proposal is also projected to create 1.23 million square feet of new commercial space and 1.29 million square feet of new community facility development. These additions will help to support the building trades that provide so many high-paying, quality jobs and enable our great city to grow.

I will break down my recommendation by addressing some station specific comments and then addressing general comments that apply to all the stations. While I recognize the DCP rezoning proposal does not include either the Co-op City or Hunts Point stations, they will nonetheless be impacted with their own new stations and so it is my intention to comment with recommendations that would affect all four stations.

Morris Park Station

Located in Community District 11, the Morris Park station has the smallest existing residential population of the four stations, but it has two of the largest commercial centers in The Bronx with the Hutchinson Metro Center and Montefiore-Einstein Medical Campus.

The Hutchinson Metro Center serves as a regional destination that employs approximately 8,000 workers on a campus of around 42 acres and has plans to scale up another 3,000 jobs in the near future. The Montefiore and Albert Einstein College of Medicine Campus is one of the most prestigious schools of medicine in the nation and recently received a \$1 Billion endowment from Dr. Ruth Gottesman for students to attend the medical school for free. Approximately 2,000 people are employed at this location, while approximately 3,000 students are enrolled. This is in addition to Jacobi Hospital, Calvary Hospital, Bronx Psychiatric Center, PSAC II, Mercy University, and several other local and regional commercial destinations in the area. Altogether, this is one of the city's top 10 largest job centers with approximately 23,000 employed.

In order to provide further support for this job center, it makes sense to plan for strategic growth along Eastchester Road, Stillwell Avenue, and Bassett Avenue where there is an opportunity for development along these main corridors and in manufacturing zones that are underbuilt and ready for redevelopment. I believe the Bassett Avenue/Stillwell Avenue area, which is where the new station will be located, has tremendous potential as a mid- to higher-density, mixed-use corridor that will allow for additional commercial growth and will help to transform the Morris Park community into one of the city's primary business centers. I support the rezoning as it is proposed, with one exception.

The one concern I have with the proposal is the area proposed to be rezoned from R4/C1-1 to a C4-3 district by Seminole Avenue and Tenbroeck Avenue. This site does not make sense as it is not connected to the larger study area, and I have not heard a reason for why this portion of the block needs to be rezoned. If there is a project that is planned, the applicant team should have been present to share their vision, but this did not happen and, therefore, I cannot support this parcel that is not contiguous with the larger rezoning and believe that it should be removed from the rezoning proposal.

There are several City Map amendments, proposed as part of the application, that would modify the street network in the area, such as the widening of Marconi Street which will help provide better access to the Bronx Psychiatric Center, the mapping of Morris Park Plaza which will provide a plaza where the new station will be located, and the proposed future extension of Marconi Street that would connect to Pelham Parkway.

I want to focus on the Marconi Street to Pelham Parkway connection which could be a gamechanger for the area. I acknowledge the concerns of those within the local community who fear that traffic will get worse, and I recognize there are traffic issues today, especially near Waters Place which has the only direct entrance to the Hutchinson Metro Center and is a destination for drivers trying to access the Hutchinson River Parkway. The Marconi Street to Pelham Parkway connection could change traffic patterns significantly, removing a large number of vehicles using local streets to access the Hutchinson Metro Center campus. I am fully supportive of this mapping and encourage the city to finance this connection. While not part of this proposal, I also encourage the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to finalize plans to have a direct connection from the Hutchinson River Parkway into this campus as well. These two changes would help alleviate a significant amount of potential traffic that the community is concerned will occur if the rezoning is approved.

Parkchester/Van Nest Station

Located in Community Districts 9 and 11, the Parkchester/Van Nest station is located between the neighborhoods of Van Nest, to the north, and Parkchester, to the south.

The Van Nest community is a residential neighborhood with predominately low- to mid-density residences located on the north side of the railroad tracks and East Tremont Avenue. Parkchester is a planned community that was built in the 1940s, consists of mid- to high-density residential buildings, and is located south of the railroad tracks and East Tremont Avenue. Approximately 40,000 people live in the Parkchester condominiums. Both the Parkchester and Van Nest neighborhoods are in a transit desert that has previously limited growth.

East Tremont Avenue, Bronxdale Avenue, and White Plains Road are all wide streets and primary corridors in these neighborhoods. The majority of the mid- to higher-density development is proposed along these streets, which makes sense from a land use perspective. There are commercial overlays planned along these corridors which would allow ground-floor commercial uses but would exclude the possibility of full commercial buildings, unlike what is proposed near the Morris Park station, and this ground-floor commercial proposal would be more in-line with development along a local main street.

Based on these observations I believe the zoning changes being proposed will yield development over time that will not only provide desperately needed housing where it makes sense but will also introduce local commercial uses that will benefit the community.

We have heard the need for more parking and the Parkchester Preservation Corp has proposed additional parking at their 1980 and 2040 East Tremont garages. They are asking DCP to increase the height from what is currently proposed to achieve this vision, as it was scoped in the Environmental Impact Statement and a modification to the special district rules could accommodate a height increase. I believe there is an opportunity to provide more parking at this location and I will continue discussing the different options with City Council and Majority Leader Amanda Farías, who is hosting public info sessions to discuss how this change could benefit the local community. I will work with the Majority Leader on supporting this ongoing outreach and will support the decision that is made.

The other project specific site that is important to discuss is 1601 Bronxdale Avenue, which is a 5.2-acre site that is immediately north of the station. While the site has a current tenant, a future vision for the site is being proposed, through the special district, that would create a planned development through an extension of Pierce Avenue into the site. The future of the site would include a new school, multiple open spaces, and a northern connection to the Metro-North station. This connection is incredibly important because it will better connect the Van Nest community, removing 15-20 minutes of walking time to access the station where it will only connect to East Tremont Avenue in the meantime. The proposed M1-1A/R7-3 zoning will allow the current use to continue while allowing for mixed-use when the site is eventually developed. I believe this proposal is appropriate and I support the vision. I ask the MTA to ensure all appropriate measures are taken and capital allocated to make the northern connection for when this site is redeveloped.

Co-op City Station

Located in Community District 10, the Co-op City station does not have any proposed land use changes, but has some of the more unique challenges among the four new station sites. The Co-op City community has been advocating to get Metro-North access for decades and I am pleased to see it has finally come together. The challenge for this area is that it is located in the lowest-density area of Co-op City, in Section 5.

While not ideal, the location of this station cannot be moved due to the existing tracks and bridge being located where it is. So, in order to ensure this station can accommodate the potential ridership that is expected and not create a parking issue within the existing community, it is imperative that a parking study is assessed, and steps taken to address getting people to and from this station. The two primary areas at this station are the Bay Plaza Shopping Center, the city's largest shopping center with over 2 million square feet of retail use, and Co-op City, the largest housing cooperative in the country, with over 15,000 units across 35 high-rise buildings and seven clusters of townhouses, accommodating nearly 50,000 residents.

The benefits of this new station are clear, because the area has bus options, but no direct subway or rail service today. Getting to Penn Station today would take at least 75 minutes but the new Metro-North Service will reduce that time to 35 minutes, shortening the commute for one of the farthest communities from Midtown by at least 40 minutes. This will be faster than any other mode of transportation and will create numerous opportunities for residents.

The MTA must ensure bus connections to Bay Plaza and Co-op City are convenient and reliable to ensure a quick trip for commuters to the station. Additionally, I believe there is a future opportunity for the MTA to create a public-private partnership for a park-and-ride that could be developed in the area. While this may not occur until the active use of the station starts, I encourage the MTA to seek the opportunity and identify any possible bus connections to any private parking garages that are seeking to adopt a park-and-ride model. I encourage the MTA to determine if a shuttle bus service could be implemented to accommodate this community, similar to the Hudson Rail Link at the Riverdale Metro-North station.

To ensure buses do not have a negative health impact on the local community, I believe the nearby Gun Hill Bus Depot should become a fully zero-emission, electric bus fleet. The goal of the MTA achieving a zero-emission fleet by 2040 should be expedited so communities that are getting more buses will not have an increase of carbon emissions that may lead to health issues.

Hunts Point Station

Located in Community District 2, the Hunts Point station has the potential to present the local community with the most new opportunities out of all the planned stations. While it is the only new Metro-North station with nearby subway access today, it is also located in one of the lowest income neighborhoods in the city and has some of the highest health disparities due to the air pollution issues in the area, as this community is located in "asthma alley". To support this

community and the environmental inequity they have sustained, prioritizing Hunts Point as a commercial e-vehicles hub will help to significantly reduce the carbon emissions this community currently endures. This will require additional e-vehicle infrastructure and adequate power storage systems being put in place.

This new station will offer the Hunts Point community direct access to new job centers in midtown, Westchester, and Connecticut, opening up employment opportunities that may not have been accessible before. I believe that the Hunts Point community stands to benefit significantly from reverse commuting. Furthermore, the station will provide quick and reliable transportation for employees of the numerous manufacturing businesses in Hunts Point. With the Hunts Point peninsula being a top 10 job center in the city, focusing on manufacturing and food distribution for both the city and the broader region. It is essential that the MTA ensures the Bx6 bus line can provide reliable service, especially given the expected increase in ridership once the new stations are operational. Similar to the Co-op City recommendation, I encourage the MTA to determine if a shuttle bus service could be implemented to provide service to this important business center. This includes the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center made up of over 155 public and private wholesalers, distributors, and manufacturers that provides 8,500 jobs and supplies 25% of NYC's produce, 35% of its meat, and 45% of its fish through the three major cooperative markets.

Like the rest of the stations, there are challenges here as well. The primary issue for the Hunts Point Station is ensuring that pedestrian connections are safe because the Bruckner Boulevard and Bruckner Expressway on-ramps can create unsafe pedestrian conditions. This crossing is expected to become much busier with commuters expected to use it to connect with the nearby 6-train. Poor sightlines and many lanes of traffic, as well as the numerous trucks that drive in the area add to the safety concerns. Investments in the underpass area are currently underway, but it needs to be continuously monitored by New York City DOT to ensure best practices are implemented.

Across All Station Areas – Co-op City, Hunts Point, Morris Park, and Parkchester/Van Nest

I want to begin by acknowledging the conditions sought by Community Boards 9, 10, and 11 which varied from wanting more density (CB 9), to wanting a cap at R6A (CB 11), to wanting no additional density (CB 10), in addition to conditions that were needed to support the new stations. While this project assumes 7,500 units of new residential and 1,900 of these units being permanently affordable, I support more overall affordable housing being developed. This proposal will create a diverse range of affordable housing options that will create new housing opportunities to a broad spectrum of residents, from students and seniors to working-class families and in order to achieve permanently affordable housing through MIH, a minimum of an R6 zoning district must be approved. With the Morris Park exception noted earlier, I believe the currently proposed zoning through the special district is appropriate, because much of the proposed density is located along wide street corridors that make sense for growth and are not directly located within the lower-density residential neighborhoods. I recognize that the proposed increase in development will cause a burden on the existing infrastructure and that improvements in the area are needed to facilitate the growth of the community. To avoid infrastructure issues, there needs to be an infrastructure fund set up to provide immediate capital for these critical projects.

I acknowledge there are at least two new schools that are proposed within the study area: a new STEAM school that will be built on Marconi Street and the school proposed as part of the future 1601 Bronxdale Avenue development. These two new schools are a positive step in the right direction, but there will need to be additional public elementary and middle schools built to sustain the increase in the community and to avoid overcrowding.

In addition to new schools, there are many other improvements that will need to be made to ensure the communities affected by the new service and stations can not only grow, but thrive. This includes the need to develop additional parkland/open space in addition to the reconstruction of Pelham Bay Park Baseball Fields, Loreto Park, Brady, and Bufano Playgrounds, the new Morris Park Plaza, and proposed 1601 Bronxdale Avenue open spaces, as well as ensuring maintenance and operation agreements are completed so these public spaces are properly maintained. There is a need to ensure the electrical, sanitation, and drainage systems are upgraded to accommodate the additional demand and this area should be prioritized for city programs such as the DEP Green Infrastructure Playgrounds that can help mitigate flooding.

The city must fund the local 41st, 43rd, 45th, and 49th police precincts to ensure they have the resources they need to ensure adequate safety in these growing communities. This is in addition to providing a new community center and job training centers that will provide recreational and educational programs for residents.

New residents means a need for further investment in health care infrastructure. This includes supporting proposals that adds more capacity to the existing healthcare institutions and hospitals in the area. I recognize healthcare as vitally important in building and sustaining healthy outcomes for families and need to ensure these institutions are supported.

While the newly built stations will be union labor, I believe it is important to support additional labor standards, especially when developers are using tax abatements. This would mean that any residential buildings with 150 or more units and that takes advantage of the 485x tax abatement program must pay all workers according to the 485x Zone A wage standard. Furthermore, I believe that the State should review and formally add relevant zip codes across the Bronx into the zones as laid out in 485x. Workers in the Bronx deserve to be paid enough to raise a family just like those in other parts of the city with a wage standard. I will continue to support apprenticeship programs as a pathway to good-paying jobs, MWBEs, and local hiring for all Bronx projects.

There should be more art in the public realm, specifically located where people walk along the railway because there are places that have chain-link fences and unwelcoming retaining walls. If this area is going to serve as a vibrant transit-oriented development corridor, it needs to ensure pedestrians feel safe in their community and on their way to the stations. Making visual improvements through beautification are ways of creating community and enhancing these areas.

Across the entire study area, it is imperative that the larger transportation network is improved. This includes ensuring sidewalks are fully built out and wide enough to accommodate pedestrians by improving pedestrian crossings in places such as across Bruckner Boulevard and making sure streetlights provide adequate lighting, especially in areas with overpasses. Trash cans must be provided to reduce litter in the community and that street trees are planted and properly maintained.

Once the stations are built, DOT should do regular reviews of the signal timings in the area to ensure vehicles are moving through the area as efficiently as possible.

This proposal does not require any parking to be built in the special district. While the core of the proposal is creating a transit-oriented development, the reality is that due to the limited public transportation options and lower-density communities that surround the area, there are a lot of drivers that have vehicles close to these new stations. With the expansion of the job centers and future growth of the area, I expect more people will be driving here as well. It is a bit counter-intuitive to say there is a need to require parking while creating public transit, but I also have concerns of lifting the parking regulations completely.

Parking is a concern that has been raised around all four stations, so it is imperative that buses are routed/re-routed to ensure each station is connected to the larger MTA network of buses and subways. The “last mile” connection is important for reducing the need to drive to the stations. The MTA must continue to explore public-private partnerships that could provide parking and that bus service can connect to these park-and-ride locations. Additionally, providing bike lanes and expanding the CitiBike program would provide additional transit modes to the stations, further reducing the need for private vehicles.

The cost of riding the Metro-North trains is more expensive than a subway “swipe”. The MTA should ensure this route is in the CityTicket program to help reduce the fare for travel and ensure all commuters can afford to use this service. The Bronx is the lowest income county in the state, and every dollar saved can make a big difference for our families. While the CityTicket program will help, it still only reduces ticket prices to \$5 during off-peak and \$7 during peak hours. I propose the MTA consider adding economy cars that would offer reduced fare choices and have a similar ticketing system as the Select Bus Service. If an even cheaper method was added, it would give people another option and save our commuters between 40% to 60% of the cost of a ticket. These economy cars would be designed for affordability and efficiency while still providing the same access and service times for commuters trying to get to their destinations quickly. There would be no requirements for anyone to use these cars and would not preclude anyone from buying a more expensive ticket. I believe a trial would show that there is a greater demand for using these trains that can be easily accommodated. This is all about equitable access. I do not want to see trains passing through The Bronx that local residents cannot afford to use it, especially when it can mean access to new job centers that can improve their livelihoods.

I will continue to fight for resources to be directed to these areas and am looking forward to the larger community plan that will be released soon by DCP, in conjunction with other agencies, that will lay out a vision for how these areas will accommodate the planned growth. I ask DCP, and the other agencies, to continue working with the local communities and elected officials, including myself, as the larger vision for these stations comes together.

Wrap-Up

I want to commend all those involved in bringing the Penn Access project to fruition. There has been years of advocacy for the rail service that is finally planned to begin in 2027 by utilizing the

existing Amtrak Hell Gate line. There is still a lot of work that needs to happen for us to get there, but the work has begun.

I want to also acknowledge the work that DCP put into outreach and engagement which began in 2018 and continued for six years, through working groups meetings, public workshops, open house sessions, roundtables, and other public events within the community. There is never a perfect plan and there will always be multiple perspectives on what this plan should look like, but the level of public engagement for turning this project into reality should be commended. DCP put in the work and this should be acknowledged.

A report was put together and is on the report page of my website: bronxboropres.nyc.gov/reports/. My 2022 Strategic Policy Statement is also accessible on the report page, which identified the Metro-North project as one of my “signature” projects. This project identifies a range of benefits, including transportation access, economic development, creating land use opportunities, and smart growth through transit-oriented development.

In order to ensure I heard directly from the communities affected by the new stations, I co-hosted a series of five public engagement workshops with the local Council Members in the fall of 2023. These sessions ensured I understood the local issues by talking directly to local residents, businesses, stakeholders, and community leaders. With nearly 450 attendees, I heard a range of feedback that has helped guide these recommendations and I want to thank every person who participated.

On April 16th I hosted a public hearing to solicit testimony from the community as part of the public review process. There was a total of 37 testimonies, with 27 in support (14 in person; 13 written) and 10 in opposition (5 in person; 5 written).

I believe the new stations and proposal will create incredible new opportunities for the existing and future growth of the neighborhoods along the Metro-North expansion area. This \$3 billion investment cannot be understated as it will finally provide much needed transit equity to communities that have been seeking it for decades. I am optimistic that the upcoming neighborhood plan will include capital commitments to address many of my recommendations. This is truly a transformative project, and for these reasons, I support this proposal with the conditions that I have laid out in this recommendation.